

JEANETTA ANN MCBRIDE

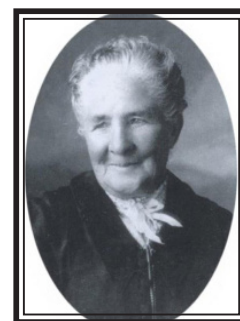
Born: 1839 England

Age: 16

Martin Handcart Company



Heber Robert McBride



Jeanetta Ann McBride

Jeanetta Ann was the first baby born to her parents that lived past infancy. Two had died previously. She came on Christmas Eve, December 24, 1839. Her family lived in South Port, England, until she was five years old. She then went to Scotland to stay with her father's parents as she was sickly and it was hoped the sea air would help her. She got most of her schooling there.

When Jeanetta was nine years old, she was baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the River Clyde on New Year's Eve. Her family lived in Scotland until she was twelve, then moved back to South Port. At the age of fourteen, Jeanetta began to learn the dressmaking trade.

When Jeanetta was about six years old, Apostle Heber C. Kimball wrote a letter to her father, Robert, encouraging him to bring his family to Zion when they were able. About ten years later the family boarded the ship *Horizon* to emigrate to America. The McBride family included father, Robert (age 52), mother, Margaret Howard (41), and their children, Jeanetta Ann (16), Heber Robert (13), Ether Enos (8), Peter Howard (6), and Margaret Alice (3).

Being the oldest children, Jeanetta and Heber had a big responsibility for their family. Jeanetta's mother became sick after they left Florence, Nebraska, and could not help very much with the pulling of the handcart. Heber wrote: "I was the oldest [boy], being just past 13 years old, and my sister [Janetta] was three years [older] than I. We had to pull the handcart all the way. Mother, being sick and having nothing for her comfort, failed very fast. She would start out in the morning and walk as far as she could, then she would give out and lie down to wait until we came along. We would take her on our cart and haul her along until we came to camp."

Margaret Howard
McBride

As the journey continued, the provisions began to run out and Jeanetta's father became very ill and weak. Heber wrote: "Father began to fail rapidly, and got so reduced, that he could not pull the handcart any more, but he could manage to walk along for a few days. Then, he and Mother would start out in the morning and walk as far as they could, along with the others who were sick and tired. There were three children younger than I. One . . . had to ride all the way, for she was only about 4 years old. The other two, being boys, managed to walk by holding onto the cart. It seemed as though death would be a blessing. We used to pray that we might die to get out of our misery.

"By this time, it was getting cold and our clothing was almost worn out, and we hadn't enough bed clothes to keep us warm. We would lie and suffer from night until morning with the cold. By this time, the teams were given out entirely, and we had to take more load on our carts. I had to haul Father and Mother.

"Sometimes we would find Mother lying by the side of the road first, then we would get her on the cart and haul her along till we would find Father lying, as if he were dead; then Mother would be rested a little and she would try to walk so Father could get on and ride. Then, we used to feel so bad; we would never get into camp until way after dark. Then we would have to hunt something to make a fire.

"Jeanetta had all the worry of taking care of us children. She carried water from the river for cooking purposes, her shoes gave out and she walked through the snow barefoot, actually leaving bloody tracks in the snow."

The family reached the last crossing of the Platte River on October 19, 1856. Jeanetta's father, in his already weakened condition, worked all day pulling, pushing, wading through the icy water, and he made an estimated 25 trips across the river helping to get all the people and carts across. Heber wrote: "The next morning there was about 6 inches of snow on the ground. What we had to suffer can never be told. Father was very bad that morning; he could hardly sit up in the tent. We had to travel that day through the snow and I managed to get Father into one of the wagons that morning. That was the last we saw of him alive."

Jeanetta and Heber had to make it to camp and pitch a tent and get some wood for a fire. After making their mother as comfortable as possible, they went looking for their father. It was after dark, the wind was blowing the snow badly and the wagons hadn't yet come in. They couldn't find their father that night. Heber continued: "The next morning, the snow was about 18 inches deep, and awfully cold. While my sister was preparing our little bit of breakfast, I went to look for Father. At last, I found him under a wagon with snow all over him. He was stiff and dead. I felt as though my heart would burst. I sat down beside him on the snow, took one of his hands in mine and cried, 'Oh, Father, Father!' There we were, away out on the plains, with hardly anything to eat, Father dead, and Mother sick and a widow with five small children, and not hardly able to live from one day to the next. After I had my cry out, I went back to the tent to tell Mother. To try and write or tell the feelings of Mother and the other children is out of the question."

Jeanetta's father was reportedly buried in a common grave with 14 other men who had died. The rest of the family struggled on, and finally rescuers found them. "After stopping a few days, word came to camp that there were ten wagons from Salt Lake that had come to meet us. They were camped about 40 or 50 miles from where we were. . . . When we got word of the wagons ahead, we received an extra one-half pound of flour, and orders to start out in the morning. . . . The news of the wagons seemed to put new life into all of us.

"When we got as far as Devil's Gate, the snow was getting too deep to pull the handcarts. . . . We camped in a cove in the mountains . . . where the wind could not get at us. . . . Nearly all the children would cry themselves to sleep every night. My two little brothers would get the sack the flour had been in, turn it wrong side out, and suck the sack for the flour. . . .

"We left this place and left our handcarts behind. This was a great relief. . . . All the small children, and the old and those that were weak and worn out, had the privilege of riding in the wagons. My sister and I saw Mother, Peter and Maggie fixed in the wagon. Ether, Jennetta and I would walk along with the others. There was snow on the ground every place we camped, and there was also some bitter cold weather. There were a great many who froze their toes and feet. . . . Those that lived to get through were in a very pitiful condition."

The McBride family arrived in the Valley on November 30, 1856. They were taken to the home of Samuel Ferrin to recuperate. Jeanetta's mother married Samuel Ferrin in May 1857. Jeanetta married his son, Jacob Samuel Ferrin on March 29, 1857. They settled in Ogden, Utah, and became the parents of eleven children.

In October 1881, Jeanetta and Jacob moved to Pima, Arizona. Jeanetta drove a team with a six-month-old baby in her arms. Jacob worked as a freighter. Only nine months later, Jacob was killed by Indians at the San Carlos Indian Reservation, leaving Jeanetta a widow with eight children still at home. The men in town built her a house as they had not yet obtained one. She stayed in Pima as a widow for forty-one years, traveling to Utah on occasion to see her children.

Sources: *Chariots of Hope*, by Darvil McBride and Bruce McBride, 1983; Daughters of Utah Pioneers history files; see trail excerpts at Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel online database, see also mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu.